

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ARA-06 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 SSM-03 EB-08
OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
ACDA-07 AID-05 IO-13 /126 W
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R 050612Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7495
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY DAMASCAS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

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E.O. 11652: GDS
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TAGS: PFOR, EFIN, SA, XF
SUBJECT: "IS IT BETTER TO RECEIVE THAN TO GIVE?": SAUDI VIEWS
ON THE PROBLEM OF AIDING SOME ARAB STATES

REF: DAMASCUS 1299, CAIRO 3410

1. FOLLOWING REFLECTS ATTITUDES OF WELL PLACED SAUDIS TOWARD

PROBLEMS OF AID TO OTHER COUNTRIES AND TOWARD THE WEALTHY LEADERS OF THE POORER NATIONS TO WHOM THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT SENDS FUNDS INTENDED TO BENEFIT THE DEPRIVED ELEMENTS OF THOSE COUNTRIES.

2. THE SAUDIS OF COURSE WOULDN'T WANT THE LEADERS OF NEARBY COUNTRIES TO GO HUNGRY OR TO BE FORCED TO DO THINGS LIKE WALK FROM ONE MINISTRY TO ANOTHER TO SEE EACH OTHER. NOR WOULD THEY URGE THEM TO DRIVE THEIR OWN LIMOUSINES BECAUSE THAT WOULD CONTRADICT A LIFESTYLE WHICH QUITE SURELY IS THE PERQUISITE OF THOSE WHO HAVE ASSUMED THE MISSION OF BRINGING THE GOOD THINGS OF LIFE TO THEIR HELPLESS PEOPLES. THUS, THE SAUDIS SAY NOTHING, ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, NOT EVEN WHEN THE LEADER OF AN IMPOVERISHED COUNTRY ARRIVES FOR A MEETING IN A SPANKING NEW BOEING 747. THEY UNDERSTAND THAT THE GREAT LEADER PURCHASED THE SPLENDID AIRCRAFT ON TICK AND BROUGHT IT TO DISPLAY TO THE FRIEND WHOM HE EXPECTED TO PAY FOR IT. WHAT COULD BE NICER THAN THAT?

3. THE SAUDIS DO, ALAS, OCCASIONALLY HOLD UP TRANSFERS OF FUNDS, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY SENSE THAT THEIR MONEY IS BEING CHANNELED TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION TO PAY FOR ARMS, AND USED FOR OTHER UNDESIRABLE THINGS. FOR SOME STRANGE REASON THEY OBJECT TO THAT AND HAVE THE FOOLISH NOTION THAT SUCH PURCHASES SHOULD BE MADE FROM THE UNITED STATES OR ANOTHER WESTERN NATION. WHEN THEY INQUIRE ABOUT THE USE TO WHICH THEIR FUNDS HAVE BEEN PUT THEY USUALLY ENCOUNTER SILENCE, OR A FLOOD OF CROCODILE TEARS OR A HAUGHTINESS WHICH THEY FEAR CLOAKS VENALITY OF A KIND, INVOLVING AS IT DOES THEIR LARGESSE, WHICH THEY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO TOLERATE. THAT IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN CERTAIN NEARBY PLACES WHERE THREE SETS OF BOOKS ARE REPORTEDLY KEPT: ONE FOR THE

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PEOPLE, ONE FOR FOREIGN CREDITORS, AND A THIRD SET FOR THE LEADER. FOR THE SAUDIS, NOTHING IS AVAILABLE: NO ACCOUNTS, NO GOODS, NO RECEIPTS FOR GOODS PURCHASED, "(NOT EVEN THE DEPOSIT SLIPS." (AS THEY ARE FINANCIALLY QUITE WELL CONNECTED, I SUSPECT THE SAUDIS KNOW A FEW THINGS ABOUT SOME OF THOSE DEPOSIT SLIPS.)

4. THE DISTURBED FEELINGS OF THE RECIPIENTS WHEN "MORE" IS EXPECTED AND "MORE" DOESN'T COME RIGHT AWAY ARE ENTIRELY UNDERSTANDABLE: THEY GIVE OUT LOUD, AND SOMETIMES RUDE, NOISES. "MORE" IN THE AMOUNT OF TWO BILLION RECENTLY ARRIVED IN ONE PLACE TO BE DENOUNCED AS STINGY. IT DISAPPEARED INTO THE YAWNING ECONOMIC MAW THAT EXISTS THERE TO CRIES THAT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN 12 BILLION. SO THE SAUDIS ARE PUZZLED. THEY SEND EMISSARIES TO THEIR BROTHERS WITH FIRMER DEMANDS FOR INFORMATION, BUT THUS FAR, IN THE PRESENT PHASE, THEY SEEM MERELY TO HAVE EVOKED ANOTHER OUTBREAK OF ABUSE FROM THE MEDIA IN THOSE PLACES, NONE OF WHICH OF COURSE IS ENCOURAGED BY THE GOVERNMENTS THERE. (THE MEDIA IN THIS REGION ALWAYS REFLECT THE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED VIEW OF THE POPULATIONS.)

5. THERE ARE SAUDIS WHO FEEL THAT THEIR DILIGENTLY MAINTAINED AND RATHER LENGTHY LIST OF CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE MADE PUBLIC, BUT IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE FIGURES WOULD CAUSE A COMMOTION HERE OR THERE, AND THE LEADERSHIP IS DISINCLINED TO BRING THAT ABOUT.

6. IN THE MIDDLE EAST, EVERYBODY KNOWS WHO MADE THE SAUDIS THE WAY THEY ARE, WITH ALL THEIR BILLION-PINCHING WAYS. THOSE AMERICANS FOUND OIL FOR THEM AND TAUGHT THEM TO BE INTERESTED IN WHERE THEIR MONEY GOES TO THE POINT WHERE THE SAUDIS HAVE BECOME TIRESOME, HAVEN'T THEY? "LEND MONEY AND LOSE A FRIEND," THE SAYING GOES. BUT, FOR THE SAUDIS IT'S "GIVE MONEY AND HEAR THE GRIPES." AH WELL, IT'S A TOUGH WORLD, BUT IT IS STILL "BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE," SAY THE SAUDIS WHO CURRENTLY PUT MORE THAN 13 PERCENT OF THEIR TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME INTO FOREIGN AID, THEY SAY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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